

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 7284

BILL NUMBER: HB 1344

NOTE PREPARED: Feb 5 2004

BILL AMENDED: Jan 29, 2004

SUBJECT: Telephone 211 Dialing Code Services.

FIRST AUTHOR: Rep. Welch

FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: As Passed House

FUNDS AFFECTED: X GENERAL
X DEDICATED
FEDERAL

IMPACT: State

Summary of Legislation: (Amended) This bill recognizes as state policy the encouragement of the use of the 211 dialing code for public access to human services information and referrals. It prohibits a state human services agency from establishing a telephone line for information or referrals without first: (1) consulting with a 211 service provider in the area to be served by the telephone line about using 211 to provide access to the information or referrals; and (2) notifying the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) of the consultation. It prohibits disseminating information about the availability of 211 services except as permitted in a rule or order of the IURC. The bill provides immunity from civil liability to a 211 service provider for acts and omissions related to the development and provision of 211 services. It also establishes the 211 services account in the state General Fund and specifies uses of the account. The bill provides that expenditures from the account are subject to State Budget Committee review. It requires the IURC to administer the account and report annually to the General Assembly on the status of 211 services and funding.

Effective Date: July 1, 2004.

Explanation of State Expenditures: (Revised) *211 Services Account:* This bill establishes the nonreverting 211 Services Account, a dedicated account within the state General Fund. The Fund consists of General Assembly appropriations, federal funds for the support of 211 services in Indiana, interest on the account, and any gifts and grants. The IURC will administer the account. Money in the account may be used to support a statewide 211 resources database that can be integrated into local databases, collecting information on 211 services, and providing grants to a recognized 211 service provider. The expenses of administering the account shall be paid from money in the account. The bill does not contain an appropriation.

IURC: This bill will increase the administrative burden of the IURC insofar as it will require the Commission to administer the 211 Services Account, promulgate rules and procedures related to the 211 service, and

receive notifications from state agencies and nonprofit organizations. The IURC is also required to report to the General Assembly annually by November 1 on the status of the 211 Services Account and the expenses incurred by the Commission in implementing the bill's requirements.

With the exception of administering the 211 Services Account, it is estimated that the IURC could absorb the costs associated with the bill's requirements. Since the bill allows money in the 211 Services Account to be used to pay the cost of administering the account, it is presumed that the Commission's costs would be covered. Prior to making expenditures from the Fund, the bill requires the IURC to prepare a plan for the expenditures of funds in the account.

Background on IURC and OUCC Funding: The operating budgets of the IURC and OUCC are funded by regulated utilities operating in Indiana. The IURC determines the rate at which to bill the utilities based on the two agencies' budgets, less reversions, divided by the total amount of gross intra-state operating revenue received by the regulated utilities for the previous fiscal year. Based on this formula, utilities are currently billed approximately 0.10% of their gross intra-state operating revenues to fund the IURC and OUCC. In FY 2003, fees from the utilities and fines generated approximately \$10.9M.

Human Service Agencies: This bill prohibits state agencies (and nonprofit organizations) that provide human services from establishing a public telephone hotline to provide information or referrals without first consulting with the state's recognized 211 service provider in the area to be served by the telephone or hotline about using 211 to provide access to information or referrals. The Family and Social Services Administration and the State Department of Health are currently members of the state's designated 211 service provider.

Background Information on the 2-1-1 Dialing Code: The FCC dedicated the "211" dialing combination for use in providing information and referral services to persons seeking social services. On February 20, 2002, the IURC announced that it had designated the Indiana 211 Partnership as the administrator and authorized party to use the 211 dialing code in Indiana. The Indiana 211 Partnership is working to create a seamless network of information and referral services that enables anyone in Indiana in need of human services to have quick referrals to those who provide them by dialing 2-1-1. The Partnership currently has fully endorsed six call centers and conditionally endorsed four centers.

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: Local human services agencies wishing to establish an information hotline are subject to the bill's requirements.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission; Family and Social Services Administration; Department of Health.

Local Agencies Affected: Local human service agencies.

Information Sources: Indiana 211 Partnership, www.in211.org; Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission.

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